

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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R 240845Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7716
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS AFL-CIO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PLAB, SHUM, SF, US, ILO
SUBJECT: MVUBELO-GROBBELAAR TRAVELS

REF: (A) STATE 124179 (NOTAL), (B) JOHANNESBURG 1266 (NOTAL),
(C) JOHANNESBURG 1254 (NOTAL), (D) JOHANNESBURG 0917 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: TUCSA GENERAL SECRETARY GROBBELAAR AND
DEPUTY VICE PRESIDENT MVUBELO PLAN TO VISIT THE UNITED
STATES NEXT MONTH FOLLOWING VISITS TO LONDON AND GENEVA.
WHILE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS REGARDING CURRENT DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN TUCSA AND THE AFL-CIO, TUC AND ILO, MVUBELO
SHARES THE VIEW OF SAG LABOR ADVISOR NIC WIEHAHN THAT
COMMUNICATION MUST BE MAINTAINED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL
LABOR MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

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2. IN A LUNCHEON CONVERSATIONS ON MAY 23, LUCY MVUBELO,
DEPUTY VICE PRESIDENT OF THE TRADE UNION COUNCIL OF
SOUTH AFRICA, CONFIRMED SHE WILL BE VISITING THE UNITED
STATES NEXT MONTH WITH TUCSA GENERAL SECRETARY ARTHUR
GROBBELAAR (REF A). MVUBELO PLANS TO DEPART JOHANNESBURG
ON MAY 29 TO ATTEND A MORAL REARMAMENT CONFERENCE IN
GERMANY BEFORE GOING TO GENEVA ON JUNE 3 TO ATTEND THE

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE. SHE AND GROBBELAAR WILL PROCEED TO LONDON ON JUNE 12 FOR MEETINGS WITH THE BRITISH TUC. THEY PLAN TO DEPART FOR THE UNITED STATES ON JUNE 20 WHERE THEIR PROGRAM WILL INCLUDE PARTICIPATION IN A CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN TRADE ASSOCIATION IN HOUSTON, TEXAS AND A MEETING WITH AFL-CIO PRESIDENT GEORGE MEANY ON JULY 5.

3. EARLIER PLANS TO INCLUDE PRESIDENT RONNIE WEBB ON THE U.S. PORTION OF THIS ANNUAL TUCSA EXERCISE IN INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY HAVE BEEN REVISED. WEBB WILL PROCEED TO GERMANY FROM GENEVA (REF B). MVUBELO WAS UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO CONFIRM WHETHER OR NOT SAG LABOR ADVISOR WIEHAHN WILL BE IN THE UNITED STATES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TUCSA VISIT. WIEHAHN RECENTLY INFORMED THE REGIONAL LABOR OFFICER (REF C) THAT HE ALSO PLANS TO RE-VISIT THE UNITED STATES NEXT MONTH.

4. COMMENT: INTERNATIONAL EXCURSIONS BY GROBBELAAR AND OTHER TUCSA OFFICIALS HAVE IN PREVIOUS YEARS BEEN SPONSORED BY MINISTER CONNIE MULDER'S DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION. THIS SAG FUNCTION APPEARS NOW TO BE COORDINATED BY WIEHAHN, WHOSE PERSONAL CLEARANCE IS ALSO REQUIRED BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR WILL PERMIT THE TRAVEL OF ANY SOUTH AFRICAN LABOR LEADERS, INCLUDING NON-TUCSA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INDEPENDENT BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS.

5. WHEN QUERIED BY THE RLO AS TO WHY TUCSA IS NOT DOING MORE TO ORGANIZE BLACK WORKERS IN VIEW OF THE PROMISE WHICH WIEHAHN IS HOLDING OUT FOR BLACK TRADE UNION RECOGNITION, MVUBELO SAID SHE MADE PRECISELY THIS ARGUMENT AT THE RECENT TUCSA MINI CONFERENCE (REF D). WHILE SHE IS CURRENTLY BUSY, FOR EXAMPLE, SPONSORING A NEW BLACK DISTRILLERY WORKERS UNION, OTHER TUCSA OFFICIALS ARE WAITING FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGES. SHE IS AFRAID THAT IF THEY DELAY TOO LONG TUCSA MAY BECOME IRRELEVANT. SHE SAID SHE IS AWARE OF THE CRITICAL VIEW WITH WHICH TUCSA IS HELD BY THE LEADERSHIP OF THE AFL-CIO, TUC AND ILO BUT SHARES WIEHAHN'S OPINION THAT COMMUNICATION MUST BE MAINTAINED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT.

6. IT IS EASY TO MISINTERPRET THE ROLE OF THE BLACK TRADE UNION LEADER SUCH AS MVUBELO WHO, WHILE A VICTIM OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, IS ONE OF THE FEW BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN'S WHO HAVE BEEN ALLOWED SOME OF THE AMENITIES ENJOYED BY WHITES. MVUBELO HAS CHOSEN TO WORK FOR CHANGE FROM WITHIN RATHER THAN FOLLOW THE PATH OF ISOLATION

AND/OR EXILE. WHETHER HER EFFORTS WILL HAVE BEEN IN
VAIN WILL DEPEND AS MUCH ON REVIVING THE SENSE OF URGENCY
IN TUCSA'S INCREASINGLY MORIBUND LEADERSHIP AS IT DOES
ON PRODDING MANAGEMENT, THE COUNTRY'S NATIONALIST PARTY
DECISION MAKERS, AND THE EMERGENT BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS TOWARD
A NEW, AND THUS FAR ELUSIVE, NATIONAL CONSENSUS.
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